

**NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL:
AAT IN MEDICAL OFFICE TECHNOLOGY,
LAUREL TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

**ACTION
Agenda Item E-1-b
March 20, 2000**

Recommendation:

That the Associate of Applied Technology program in Medical Office Technology proposed by Laurel Technical College be provisionally approved and registered in CIP 52.0404 (Medical Administrative Assistant/Secretary).

Rationale:

- The proposed associate degree program provides training for individuals interested in working as medical office personnel. The objectives of the program are consistent with the mission of the institution.
- An advisory committee, the health care industry in the area, and current diploma program students indicate strong support for the program. Employment opportunities exist in hospitals, medical centers, and other health facilities in counties surrounding London. Jobs in this occupational area are projected to increase by up to 55 percent between 1994 and 2005.
- The proposed program meets curricular standards established by the Council on Occupational Education. The general education component may be completed at Laurel Technical College, Somerset Community College's Laurel Center, other regionally accredited colleges and universities, or the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University.
- Laurel Technical College already offers a diploma program in Medical Office Technology. The faculty meets the requirements of the Council on Occupational Education. Current classrooms, laboratories, and library facilities and services are adequate to support the program. Financial resources necessary to program success are already allocated to the diploma program or are available through internal reallocation.
- The program is recommended for provisional approval contingent upon satisfactory results of a site visit to be conducted by the Council on Occupational Education within 90 days after the program begins. The on-site visit will validate whether the technical college has the institutional capacity to offer the degree-level program as described in the program proposal.

An executive summary submitted by Laurel Technical College through the KCTCS is attached to this agenda item.

Staff Preparation by Charles Wade

Kentucky and Community Technical College System
Laurel Technical College
Proposal for Initiation of a New Degree Program
Associate in Applied Technology in Medical Office Technology

Executive Summary

Mission, Influence, Organization

The Associate in Applied Technology (AAT) degree in Medical Office Technology supports the KCTCS mission by providing the training necessary to develop a skilled and versatile workforce to meet the needs of new and existing business and industries. Trained medical office personnel are needed to support new and existing medical technologies in a highly competitive marketplace. Also, one of the college's long-range planning goals is to offer an associate degree program in Medical Office Technology for meeting local employers' needs for medical office personnel.

Courses required in the AAT degree program in Medical Office Technology will be offered through a collaborative effort between Laurel Technical College and Somerset Community College. Laurel Technical College faculty will teach the technical course requirements while Somerset Community College will teach the general education courses.

Program Description

Medical office workers prepare medical records and reports, maintain files, order supplies, perform accounting procedures and receive patients in a variety of health care settings. The Associate in Applied Technology degree in Medical Office Technology is designed to provide a two-year technical degree program that meets specific workforce needs for medical office personnel in the surrounding area.

Approved by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System Board of Regents in September 1998, the Associate in Applied Technology degree requires completion of at least 15 credit hours of general education courses, 32 credit hours of major courses, and at least 16 credit hours in one of five option areas, some of which include elective courses. Option and elective course requirements permit customization of the degree to accommodate different types of medical offices and different areas of specialization within each office. Because of the unique curricular flexibility provided by options as well as the availability of technical electives, the degree program will provide students the opportunity to specialize in one of the following medical office areas: administrative, medical records, software applications, insurance coding, and transcription. The general education component is designed to enhance the technical skills of a diploma graduate with broader employability skills such as mathematics, communication and teamwork skills that are required for effective performance in today's workplace. Students may select the nontransferable or transferable general education component of the program. Under the transferable general education option, students will complete the required courses at Somerset Community College's Laurel Center. The program will meet the needs of students

who seek the degree to meet employment requirements, for pay incentives, and/or for job advancement opportunities.

Supportive Data

Medical facilities in Laurel County and the surrounding area have expressed the need for a skilled workforce that is prepared to meet the needs of medical offices. Based on statistics from the *Cumberland Valley Area Occupational Employment Outlook and Job Openings to 2005* published by the Workforce Development Cabinet, regional job openings in the field of Medical Office Technology will increase by 50 to 55 percent from 1994 to 2005. Medical Office Technology has been classified as a fast growth occupational area.

Numerous medical facilities, former graduates, community representatives serving on Laurel Technical College's Business Technology Program Advisory Committee, and currently enrolled students have expressed strong support for the AAT degree program in Medical Office Technology through surveys and letters.

Resources

Classroom and lab facilities are up-to-date and meet the requirements of the proposed program without requiring any renovations or structural changes. Library services are available to technical college student at Somerset Community College and through the Commonwealth Virtual Library. Laurel Technical College will operate a bookstore that will supply books and materials.

Laurel Technical College presently employs Business Technology faculty that meet the accreditation requirements of the Council of Occupational Education. No additional funding is needed, as the Medical Office Technology diploma program currently exists at Laurel Technical College.

Conclusion

Approval of the Associate in Applied Technology degree program in Medical Office Technology at Laurel Technical College will provide a valuable educational track for meeting the documented needs of businesses, industries, and students. This degree will greatly expedite the efforts to develop a highly trained, educated pool of medical office personnel available for immediate employment. Laurel Technical College and Somerset Community College are working collaboratively and share available resources to efficiently meet the specific needs of students and businesses in the college's area.